

Letters

Entrepreneur Alert

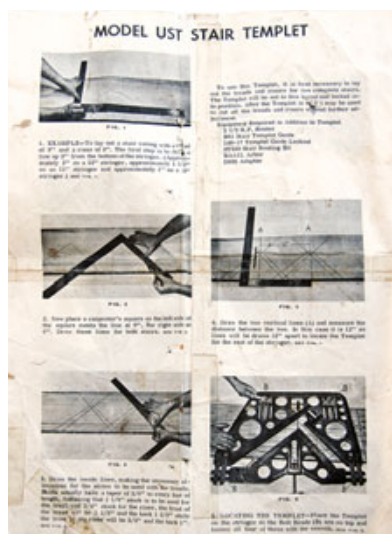
I was impressed with the massive router template shown on the cover of the November issue in connection with the article “Installing Housed Treads and Risers,” by Ken Reis. Would you please contact the owner of the template and get the name of the manufacturer and the model and name of the template? No doubt the patent has long expired, but perhaps Woodpeckers or some other CNC tool manufacturer would be interested in reproducing the router template out of a composite or aluminum stock. It was a good idea then, and it’s a great idea now.

Joe Nash

Urbandale, Iowa

Author Ken Reis responds: The template was made by Rockwell; it’s called simply UST-1, which, I believe, stands for universal stair template. It’s made of cast iron and is fully adjustable. I think it was originally intended for glue

and wedge type stairs, but it can also be used for a stairway with rough stringers, as my article describes. The kit that came with the template included collars of different sizes to accommodate various tread thicknesses, as well as



KEEP 'EM COMING!

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a special bit — similar to a dovetail bit — that undercuts the routed slot to improve the fit between the tread and the skirtboard. I’ve looked online for replacement bits and parts but have had no luck.

I acquired the template from an older builder in my area, Dori Klimshuk, who after seeing a set of my stairs on a job site asked me if I would be interested in the tool. It has changed the way I do stairs. Sometimes the best way to move forward is to take a look back, and see how things used to be done.

Cedar Ridges

I’ve been an old-house enthusiast for 30 years and am a huge fan of cedar shingle roofs. Your recent article on the subject (“Roofing With Cedar Shingles,” 11/09) was the best and most comprehensive one I have seen. In our area, the only roofing materials available to the old-timers were cedar, terne metal, and slate. Most carpenters used cedar shingles, and in my restoration work that’s what I chose.

On the first roof I did, 35 years ago, I used ridge caps made from shingles. At that time you couldn’t get pre-made cap shingles, so I made my own. Afterward, I noticed it was common to use a metal ridge roll instead of cap shingles, with either simple ball terminators or fancier ones depending on the style of the house. So I took this approach on the next roof, using a copper ridge roll, and would recommend it to other readers who are reshingling a roof on an old home; I think it looks neater and more authentic. The suggestion in the article of using a strip of self-adhering membrane under the ridge roll is a good one. An Internet search will yield several sources for metal ridge rolls and terminations, including Old World Distributors and Chris Industries.

The article also mentioned using less than a 1/4-inch gap between shingles if they are wet. This is crucial, and something I would do even if they are not wet, because the wood will shrink. Looking at a roof I installed 20 years ago with 1/4-inch gaps, I can see there is now 1/2 inch between shingles.

Dan Miller
Elgin, Ill.